

Winter Weather Safety Tips

Winter weather can be very treacherous. It brings freezing temperatures, decreased visibility, increased falling hazards and warmer temperatures indoors. **Employers who show they are prepared and care about the safety of their employees see improved morale, increased productivity, and fewer injuries.** Being weather ready can help employees avoid potential accidents and help keep them safe.

POOR VISIBILITY-

- Increased darkness and inclement weather (wind and snow) cause restricted visibility.
- Keep paths and walkways well lit.
- Remind employees to slow down, increase following distance, and always keep headlights on when driving.
- Ensure company vehicles are in good order by changing wiper blades, checking that all lights, fluid levels and tire pressure are maintained.
- Ensure that emergency kits are stocked, and include blankets and emergency rations.
- Advise staff to stay aware of their surroundings and watch for obstacles when visibility is poor, and to pull off the road if driving and conditions are poor.

SLIPPERY SURFACES-

- Snow, sleet, rain, and freezing fog create hazardous surfaces in the winter months.
- Remind employees to take extra caution by slowing down, taking short steps and staying alert while walking.
- Encourage staff to wear insulated footwear that is water resistant and has good traction.
- Clear walkways of ice and snow.
- Spread deicer on walkways and entrances.
- Ensure handrails are in good working order.
- Place anti slip strips on stairs.
- Provide a way to dry off footwear at each of the entrances to your buildings. Make sure caution signs are clearly posted and visible.

TEMPERATURE CHANGES-

- Freezing temperatures and wind can cause bodily harm when working outside.
- Ensure that weather appropriate gear is provided to, and worn by, employees working outdoors.
- Train employees to recognize the signs of frostbite (cold, numb, pins and needles, stinging and reduced sensation to touch) and hypothermia (exhaustion, confusion, slurred speech, drowsiness)
- Provide a place for employees to dry off and warm up.
- Additionally, with temps falling outside, they increase inside. It is a good time to remind staff of the importance of staying hydrated. Dehydration and overheating can cause fatigue and less lubrication/cushion in our joints, which can lead to injuries. Provide employees with the ability to stay hydrated.
- Closed windows and increased thermostats can lead to reduced air circulation, which can lead to illnesses. Improve circulation by opening windows when possible, changing air filters, inspecting vents and returns, installing HEPA filtration systems, and ensure cleaning products are used properly.

Let's help everyone enjoy the season by staying safe and healthy!